

*W. H. D. Hayle, Esq. reads*

AN  
ADDRESS  
ON THE  
HOMŒOPATHIC SYSTEM  
OF  
MEDICINE,  
READ BEFORE THE  
MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SOCIETY,  
AT THE  
LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INSTITUTION.

Newcastle on Tyne,

JANUARY 31<sup>ST</sup>, 1843.

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BY THOMAS HAYLE, M. D.

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“ Non ullam aut vim aut insidias hominum judiciis facimus aut paramus ; verum eos  
ad res ipsas et rerum fœdera adducimus ; ut ipsi videant quid habeant, quid arguant, quid  
addant atque in commune conferant.”

BACON.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following Address is published for the same reason which induced its composition and delivery, a hope that it will extend the influence of Homœopathy. Much opposition has hitherto been made to the system, and much ridicule lavished upon it from an ignorance of the principles upon which it is based, and even of the facts ridiculed. Men have been ridiculing their own devices. It is therefore hoped that a mere statement of the case will go far to put matters on a different footing; inasmuch as it removes the ground of ridicule. Nay, more; when it is shewn that the course of investigation pursued by Hahnemann commends itself to the mind as a beautiful specimen of philosophical induction, it is believed that the legitimacy of the course pursued will dispose the public to treat with greater respect the facts discovered, however strange they may at first sight appear, and that it will be indeed a presumptive evidence of their truth. In short, it is hoped that this Essay will smooth the way to an examination of the truth

of the facts asserted, by shewing the possibility of their truth, and thus give to testimony its proper weight. It is addressed specially to the medical profession, as its members are best able to judge of the facts it records, or to enter into the investigation it solicits, while their conviction is the speediest, and surest, and only practicable mode of conveying the advantages of the system to the community. There are, however, but few technicalities in it; and both the line of argument taken, and the illustrations given, are quite within the scope of the general reader.

3, *Jesmond Terrace*, Feb. 14, 1843.

## ADDRESS ON HOMŒOPATHY.

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GENTLEMEN,

It is the duty of every one, who becomes acquainted with a new set of facts, or convinced of the truth of a new set of opinions, to submit those facts and opinions to the public, that their truth and value may be tested in various ways; and most imperative does that duty become when they relate to such an important matter as the treatment of disease. For, if the facts or opinions be true, concealment is a negative injury, and multitudes will die from their being withheld: if they be false, the individual who maintains their truth loses the opportunity of being set right, and subjects himself to the enormous guilt of sacrificing his patients to false opinions, which he may, but will not submit to the ordeal of fair and temperate discussion. Under this conviction, Gentlemen, I have sought the earliest opportunity of laying before you a statement of the facts, and opinions based upon them, comprised under the general term, “Homœopathy,” with my reasons for having adopted



them. In doing this, he who now addresses you is deeply conscious that he labours under great disadvantages. As a stranger, his testimony to facts is comparatively of small value; but he urges that they are reproducible, and court investigation. He wants for his testimony not belief, but inquiry. He urges that the apparent incredibility of a set of reputed facts, that their apparent contradiction to our preconceived notions, is not of itself a reason for rejection without inquiry; that this would be making our belief and preconceived ideas a measure of the universe; and that those who pursue such a line of argument must in consistency deny the earth's motion, and the position of objects at the antipodes. At the same time he is well aware, from a recollection of his former feelings, how a stranger, advocating such opinions, must appear before you; and he therefore throws himself upon your indulgence, while he lays before you his own reasons for having adopted them.

I had long been dissatisfied with the ordinary practice of medicine: I was proud of the anatomical, physiological, and pathological parts of my profession; but when I considered the therapeutical, I could not but grieve over the uncertainty which characterized its details. On reading any new work on disease, I could not but be struck with the accuracy of the descriptions; by

the ingenuity with which symptoms were classed, and referred to their appropriate seats, and the intricacies of sympathy unravelled, in short, with all the patient and often successful labour of the pathological investigation ; but when I came to the therapeutics, it seemed as if order had become confusion, as if light had given way to darkness. The most discordant testimonies as to the value of the medicines were adduced, the most opposite modes of treatment recommended. It was evident that the medicines were often selected on the most obscure analogies and unproved hypotheses, and often, as the French would say, “ Par voie d'exclusion :” I have tried every thing else, and, therefore, this must be the medicine at last. It was evident that there was no regular law of exhibition ; for if you consulted different physicians of eminence on any case, you would have very different opinions, and the same physician would often be seen running upon the same medicine in different diseases. The same thing would be always happening in the professional world at large. A medicine, found useful in a particular class of diseases, would acquire a name, and be run upon until another came to supersede it. There was, as it were, a fluctuation in the unknown depths of remedial agency ; and now one, and then another, would be upheaved from the abyss to appear for a time, and then to return to the profundity from



which it had emerged. Fashion, not sound philosophy, regulated the choice. These observations refer, not so much to acute diseases, and to those which run a certain course, as to chronic diseases; and with regard to these, every candid physician will admit that the practice is often avowedly empirical. I beg also to state, that in making them I am actuated by no spirit of criticism or wish to run down, but that I wish to lay before you clearly my reasons for being dissatisfied. I did not think the mode of therapeutical investigation a philosophical one. To try a remedy upon a diseased person, was evidently calculated to lead to confusion in the results. The phenomena observed might be caused by the medicine or by the disease, or by both; and yet I did not see how the matter was to be remedied, and began to think of giving up the practice of my profession. While I was thus doubting, a copy of Hahnemann's *Organon* was sent to me, and, being much struck with his arguments, I determined to give his medicines a trial. The great stumbling-block was the smallness of the dose. I did not believe that such a dose could have any action at all; at the same time clearly saw that it could easily be proved whether it acted or not. I had only to make the experiment. Accordingly, I began with cases which I had given up as incurable, and submitted them to homœopathic treatment. I



soon obtained results, which gave strong presumptive evidence of the action of the remedy: results, at least, were obtained, which were neither attributable to imagination nor diet. The patients did not know what they were taking, and they had been unaffected by previous treatment. It was, of course, likely; that if their imaginations had been the cause of improvement, this cause would have acted during the long allopathic treatment which I had previously administered. As to diet, no change was made; and the duration of treatment was often too short for it to have any influence. Many cases of amenorrhœa, for instance, of long standing, were relieved in two or three days after the treatment commenced. There were also many cases of an invariable and long established order of symptoms, where speedy results, affecting and destroying this order, occurred. One case of this character is so remarkable, that, although it did not occur at this particular period of the investigation, I am tempted to mention it. A female applied to me, labouring under a complication of disorders, in which the stomach and uterus bore the chief share. I administered medicines for some time without effect, until she mentioned a symptom which she had till then withheld. Every night, between eleven and twelve, she would awake out of her first sleep, and bring up the contents of her stomach. This would

occur invariably, and had done so for a long time. I sent her a remedy, calculated to attack the tableau of symptoms as now discovered to me, and the very first night after she took it, she lost her vomiting. Nor has it ever recurred. There was no time here for the effects of diet, and indeed no change was made. Imagination also had proved its impotence before. The result of my trials on cases which I deemed incurable was, that the coincidences were strange, and so frequent, as to warrant my proceeding with the trial in slight cases of an acute character. In the phlegmonous diseases it is well known imagination has little or no effect, and that diet is out of the question as a cause of cure, for the patient generally can eat nothing; besides this, if unchecked, they generally run a certain course; the changes are gradual, and they are thus admirably qualified to become the tests of medicinal agency. I therefore proceeded with the investigation, fully convinced that the experiments would become decisive, and anxiously watched the results. They surpassed every thing I could have conceived. Erysipelas of the face, which for twenty-four hours had agonized the patient, and prevented sleep, in an hour after the exhibition of the medicine, relaxed its hold; a sweet sleep stole over the wearied sufferer, which lasted all the night; and when, in the morning, I examined the seat of the disease, the change was



wonderful. Instead of a red shining swelling, which distorted the whole face, all was natural; the wrinkles left were the only evidence of the previous distension. With the same marvellous celerity would *Cynanche Tonsillaris* often yield; and when the effects were not so speedy, yet was the relief evident, and gratefully acknowledged by the patient. The constant recurrence of these results soon convinced me that I had no greater evidence for the truth of gravitation, or any the most certainly believed order of facts, than for the truth of the Homœopathic principle, and the action of minute doses. I thankfully adopted the practice of the new system, gave up the use of the lancet and purgatives, and have had fresh reason almost every day to congratulate myself on the change. The inflammatory diseases, especially those of children, I have found uniformly under command; nor has a single case of croup or hydrocephalus resisted the treatment. The number of cases treated of all kinds upon this principle, has been about 1,500.

After this brief account, Gentlemen, of the reasons which have induced me to adopt the new system, I now proceed to lay before you an account of the reasoning which led Hahnemann to his great discovery, and to endeavour briefly to obviate the objections which are most commonly urged against his system.

Dr. Paley, with his usual discernment, observes, “that the annexing of pain to the means of destruction, is a salutary provision; inasmuch as it teaches vigilance and caution; both gives notice of danger, and excites those endeavours which may be necessary to preservation.” And even before Hahnemann’s discovery, it might have been shewn to be probable that not only pain, but also the various modifications of diseased action, altered secretions, abnormal movements, &c., were intended by the Creator as guides to treatment. It might have been argued with great force, from the characters of wisdom and goodness impressed on the whole creation, that as man was a creature made liable to disease, its remedy would be placed within his reach; that there would be a natural relation between the remedy and the disease; and that that relation would be discoverable by the exercise of his faculties: that, in fact, the symptoms of the disease would be signs for the application of the remedy. The existence and nature of this relation between the remedy and the disease Hahnemann thinks he has proved; and I now proceed to unfold the train of reasoning by which he was guided in the investigation, and which led him to adopt the Homœopathic theory as the only one capable of explaining the facts observed. It was evident, he said, that the Almighty had surrounded man with a number of substances,



animal, vegetable, and mineral, useless as nourishment, but possessing the property of affecting the actions of his system. It was natural to suppose that these substances, elaborated with so much care, had a use; and what use but that which their properties indicated, that of controuling and annihilating the morbid actions of the animal economy? They deranged it in health: might they not restore it in disease? That which altered action in one case, was calculated to do it in another. But, then, the law of application? On what principle were these substances to be administered? What was the relation between their pure and primitive effects, and the symptoms of the disease they removed? Here it became evident, that only one of the things to be compared was known. The nature of the disease was known by its symptoms; but the symptoms caused by the medicine were not ascertained. All that was known of its action resulted from its use in disease where it was impossible to say what was its direct action. The symptoms resulting from its use under these circumstances, might arise from the medicine, or from the disease, or from both; consequently no sound conclusion could be arrived at. Thus, on the supposition of a cure by the medicine, as nothing was known about its pure and primitive effects, so no comparison could be instituted, no relation ascertained, and the principle of cure

remained undiscovered. Hence the reason, said Hahnemann, that the experience of ages has advanced the art of healing so little; where accident had wrought a cure, no advantage could be taken of the result, except to readminister the medicine in apparently similar cases; an attempt almost hopeless, in consequence of the Protean nature of disease. There are but few diseases that recur in an exactly similar form; Sydenham,\* indeed, has recorded that his experience in the treatment of preceding epidemics ever played him false at the occurrence of a new one.

Thus it has been that the experience of one age has seemed to contradict the experience of its predecessor, and the history of the art of healing has had nothing to reveal but a mass of contradictions. In diseases of fixed character only has the experience of the past been of any avail, and given to us bark for intermittents, sulphur for itch, and mercury for syphilis. Clearly seeing, therefore, in his own mind, the reason of the failure and the thing required for success, Hahnemann sedulously applied himself to supply the deficiency. The problem was, How are the pure and primitive effects of medicines on the animal economy to be ascertained? The rules of philosophical investigation required that, in examining the effects of an agent, all

\* Sydenham, *Oper.* p. 44, Lips. 1711.



external influences should be removed. He who should estimate the variation of the needle in the neighbourhood of a magnet, would be sure to incur both failure and ridicule. To endeavour to ascertain the effects of a medicine on the body labouring under another influence, that of disease for instance, was clearly an attempt of a similar character, in which the perseverance of three thousand years had failed, and which the sacred nature of the subject had alone preserved from ridicule. Another rule to be observed was, that in investigating and comparing the effects of different medicines, the circumstances should be exactly similar, in order that the point of departure might be the same. Both these conditions were answered by the healthy body under a prescribed regimen and diet, and Hahnemann therefore proceeded in the following manner. The men selected, he himself among the number, were sound in mind and body, religiously observant of the necessary diet, of great powers of observation, and, by their freedom from other occupations, totally given up to its exercise. All influences which could disturb either mind or body were carefully avoided or removed. The medicines used, as simple in their form and as pure in their substance as possible, were taken at greater or lesser intervals until the experimenters felt themselves really affected, and definite symptoms appeared.

The doses themselves were moderate, generally those used in the ordinary treatment of disease, in order, on the one hand, to avoid danger, or their tumultuous expulsion from the system; and, on the other, that their primary effects should be developed as purely as possible, unmixed with the secondary effects or antagonistic efforts of the system. The field that lay before these devoted men was vast, untrodden, and beset with thorns and pitfalls; yet did they cheerfully set themselves to traverse it. The submission of one's mind and body to the influence of artificial disease, and the surrender of all those luxuries which habit has almost rendered necessities, are acts of a style of philanthropy which can only be appreciated after a trial. The *argumentum ad hominem*, however, is quite sufficient to entitle them to our respect—Would you incur these certain dangers, submit yourself to these unknown horrors, and make these sacrifices, from these motives? Most would shrink from this appeal, and even those who felt the sacred fire within would not be the less aware of what they undertook to encounter and sacrifice. If these men were charlatans and quacks, knaves or fools, verily they began their career after a strange fashion!

The result of these labours, which were carried on with scrupulous exactness and untiring patience for nine successive years, was a body of



information of almost incredible minuteness, of unparalleled extent, and of undoubted accuracy. Placed beside this wonderful monument of philosophic labour, the scanty gleanings of bygone ages remind us of the random observations of the older astronomers, compared with the exact, elaborate, and comprehensive researches of a Herschell or Laplace. Exhibiting, as these experiments do, the direct agency on the healthy body of medicines commonly used in the treatment of disease, the information they afford is of a deeply interesting character to those who use them. Evidence is thus given of their character; their peculiarities are brought out and exhibited in the symptoms they produce; and indications of the highest value may be thus afforded for their use in disease. Is medical science so rich in facts of this nature that it can afford to reject the experiments of Hahnemann? The deductions he draws from these experiments, the principle of *similia similibus*, and the assertion that minute doses exhibited on that principle can cure, are contrary to our preconceived ideas, and shock our notions of probability; and the majority, on this score alone, reject testimony with regard to them without inquiry. But the case is widely different with regard to the experiments themselves; and the rejection of the light thrown by them on the action of the very medicines used in disease, by the very men who

are using them, is a fact only to be accounted for on the supposition that these experiments have not yet been brought out separately to public view. They have been considered part of a system too improbable to need inquiry, and have been rejected as a part of an improbable whole. Yet it is undeniable, and must be admitted by every sound reasoner, that whatever fate the Homœopathic theory may meet with, the *Materia Medica Pura* of Hahnemann, or his researches into the action of medicines on the healthy body, deserves inquiry. It is true, indeed, that Sir Gilbert Blane has said, "the virtues of medicines cannot be fairly nor beneficially ascertained by trying their effects on sound subjects, because the peculiar morbid condition which they are calculated to remove does not exist." The ground, however, upon which this assertion is based, is not solid. It is quite true that in the pathogenetic experiment, or, in other words, the experiment on the healthy body, the morbid condition the medicine is calculated to remove does not exist; but it is not true that therefore the experiment is useless. For it must first be proved that no relation between the pathogenetic effects of the medicine, and the disease it is calculated to remove, exists. If there be such relation, and such Hahnemann maintains there is, the assertion fails, because the reason, upon which it is based, does not apply to the



case in question. He who maintains such an assertion must first prove that no such relation exists. As the matter stands, there is no argument, but a mere dictum, which may be true or false as the case shall turn out. Whoever, however, considers that the power of a medicine in curing disease is that very same power by which it disturbs the healthy body; that if it had no power to disturb, it could have no power to cure, will perceive such an assertion to be extremely improbable. He will perceive that great light may possibly be thrown on the application of a remedy in disease, by watching its disturbing agencies in health; and he will be thankful for any information of such a character. If it be argued, indeed, that because in the healthy state of the body medicines disorder, and in the morbid they cure, therefore the powers by which they disorder and cure are respectively different; that they have one power to disorder and another to cure; it may be answered that the states of the thing acted on are different, and account for the results. It can be shewn that the agent is the same, that the thing acted on is the same, and that the difference between the cases is the *state* of the thing acted on. In the fact that the very same impulse, which, communicated to the pendulum while oscillating in the same direction, accelerates its motion, retards it in its returning vibration, we see an

analogous case. And when, standing on the shore, we look over a channel crowded with ships, and see some on one tack and others on another, some beating up against, others running before the wind, having their heads turned and progress made to almost every point in the compass, we see a beautiful instance of a multitude of different effects resulting from the action of the same agent on bodies in different circumstances. Such a supposition involves also the notion of a complexity nowhere else observed in the works of creation; a complexity that would have baffled man in the only legitimate and inductive way that was open to him of finding out the means of curing his own diseases. To have given medicines two powers, having no relations to one another, one to disorder and another to cure, would have rendered all comparison between the two impossible; would have closed the gates against induction from pathogenetic experiments; would have left us to experiment on morbid states, a useless attempt on account of the shifting nature of the ground; and would, in fact, have been placing a sword before us, which should "turn every way to keep the way of the tree of life." But the fact is opposed to such an opinion. Let any one endeavour to find a medicine which, having power to cure disease, shall have no power to disorder the healthy body, or vice



versâ, and he will be soon convinced that there is no such thing as a separation of these qualities. There is, indeed, an absurdity in the very idea of attempting to treat disease with a substance which in no quantity can derange the healthy economy.

The influence, then, both pathogenetic and curative, of medicines, is the same influence ; the difference of effect being owing to the different circumstances of the thing acted on. This therefore being admitted, it only remained for Hahnemann, after having ascertained the effects of certain remedies on the healthy body, to find out what diseases they would cure, and, having now the elements of comparison, to fix the relations between the things compared. The analogy, however, might have been very obscure. A medicine, in curing, might not have acted on the part affected ; it might have acted on some particular different part, whose sympathies with the part affected might have been very obscure : and the law of cure might have been any relation whatever between the symptoms of the disease and the pathogenetic symptoms ; that, for instance, of similarity, Homœopathy, of opposition, Enantiopathy, or of difference in any conceivable way, Allopathy. It is evident that no ingenuity can predict a law if there be no data. No one, for instance, could *a priori* have predicted the time of the earth's diurnal revolution. The question,

therefore, was one of pure experiment; and in this way alone did Hahnemann seek to resolve it. By careful and repeated experiments, he established the fact that the relation between the pathogenetic effects of a medicine, and the disease it is calculated to cure, is that of similarity as to the symptoms, of identity as to the parts affected. Thus does every medicinal agent, in its effects on the healthy body, present a picture of the disease it is designed to cure; and the law of cure is thus the simplest and the most easily applied to practice of any that could have been devised. No small recommendation this of a principle, and no small argument for its probability to those who consider the characters of benevolence that are evident and vastly predominate in the works of creation. This law of cure was suggested to Hahnemann by the properties of the very first medicine which he subjected to experiments. Employed in translating Cullen's *Materia Medica*, he was struck with the numerous and contradictory virtues ascribed to the Peruvian Bark. As he was convinced that the only legitimate way of ascertaining the virtues of any medicine was to try it on the healthy body, he determined to try it on himself; and, after some time, symptoms similar to those of the sort of intermittent it cured, to his great surprise, presented themselves. His acute mind at once suspected that what was the case with



one medicine must be the case with another ; and that similarity between the pathogenetic effects of a medicine and the diseases it cured was the law of cure, till now hid from mankind. He inquired into the testimonies of authors as to the effects of medicines taken by healthy persons by mistake, or for the purpose of suicide, and found enough, although the accounts were very meagre, to make him wish to inquire farther. Then was it that he entered upon the laborious and dangerous inquiry which I have already detailed, and which, in every instance, proved the truth of his suspicions. It is singular that the very first medicine he should have selected for trial, should have been one which had the power of curing a fixed form of disease. Had there been no fixed forms of disease, or had bark not had the property of curing one of them ; had it been only of service in those Protean forms which so commonly occur in practice, it would have been as difficult to have got standards of comparison as to have measured the moisture in the atmosphere, or to have determined the exact value of any fluxional quantity. The discovery made by the Indians of America, that bark cured intermittents, was the first step in this wonderful discovery ; for had Hahnemann, through their means, not known that bark had this property, its producing a species of intermittent could not have suggested a law of cure ;

for he would have had no standard of comparison, but must have sought one by trying the remedy in each disease as it occurred ; an endless task, and calculated to baffle the energies of the most philosophical and persevering mind.

The law, then, as established by Hahnemann, is this. The agent which produces a certain group of symptoms in the healthy body, will remove a similar group produced by any other agent. This law he styled "Homœopathy," a word compounded of two Greek ones, "*ὅμοιος*" similar, and "*πάθος*" affection or suffering ; because similarity between the pathogenetic and diseased symptoms was the principle upon which it was founded. It is to be remarked, that although the symptoms are similar, yet the agents are different ; the pathogenetic agent must be different from the cause of the disease. Hence all that has been said against the law, on the supposition that it was "that which causes, cures," is founded on misapprehension, and must fall to the ground. It must also be observed, that similarity of symptoms, not identity, is the principle upon which the law of cure is founded ; that Homœopathy, not Homopathy, is the law which Hahnemann has discovered ; and this, indeed, might have been expected from the fact, that the curative agent and the cause of the disease are different, for no two substances have the property of producing a group of symptoms



identical in character ; or if there were any possessing this property, the rarity of such an occurrence would render an attempt to treat disease on such a principle useless.

I am thus particular, for much has been uselessly urged against Homœopathy, from an ignorance of these facts, which could never have been urged had they been known. The proof of this law is of the same character as the proof of any other physical law. The test of experiment is the only test to which it is amenable ; and if it is established by that test, it takes rank with gravitation or electricity, to be accounted for and explained if possible, but certainly to be admitted as fact. That we can explain any facts, or any expression of an order of facts, ought not to affect our belief of them, until it first be proved that our faculties are capable of taking in the whole view of the works of an infinite Creator ; and, secondly, that we have got the whole view before us, even if our capability be admitted. To apply the cause of a similar affection in disease, would seem to be merely the addition of another cause, the application of another irritant ; and we might have expected that the system, already unequally engaged with a powerful antagonist, would have been overwhelmed at the addition of another foe. It is strange ; it may be inexplicable ; but what if it be proved to be fact ? Shall the strangeness of a fact disprove

its existence? What if those who object to this law, on account of its improbability, avail themselves of it almost every day of their lives? Let me ask, and I ask with all respect, whether it be consistent that those who cure sore eyes with astringent lotions, ulcers with escharotics, and burns with turpentine, should object to the principle of *similia similibus* because it supposes the addition of another irritant can cure? Oh! why admit the facts as long as they are isolated, but deny them as soon as they assume a consistent and useful connection, and promise to lift the practice of medicine from its unsettled base of quicksands, and ground it upon the sure foundation of an established law?

The law, however, well considered, is not so strange as it would at first sight appear: its strangeness is more apparent than real. He who considers what I have stated before, that the circumstances of the body acted on by the medicine are different in the pathogenetic and curative experiments, will perceive, that it does not follow, that because the medicine given in health produces a certain tableau of symptoms, that therefore it must necessarily have a tendency to produce the same tableau when it already exists, excited by another cause. The circumstances of the body acted on are different, and therefore the results may be expected to be different, as indeed they are. This fact is generally overlooked. It is

supposed that because a medicine, given in health, produces a certain set of symptoms, therefore it will always produce them, in utter forgetfulness of the fact that the result is compounded of the thing acted on and the agent, and that the state of the former has as great a share in that result as the latter. Hence, the same wind produces different motions in ships, according to their different positions. This is all, however, I shall venture to say in extenuation of the difficulties of the subject. I have no theory to offer, nor do I think the time has yet arrived for proposing one. We do not yet know any thing of the mode in which medicines immediately act on the living body ; impenetrable difficulties seem to present themselves even to the investigation of the chemical changes ; and, in an utter ignorance of these topics, it seems vain to attempt a theory.

As, however, it may be interesting to know what may have been attempted in the way of explanation, I proceed briefly to state the theories which have been proposed, premising that I undertake to defend none of them.

They are resolvable into three, which may be respectively styled theories of substitution, promotion, and reaction. The theory of substitution was proposed by Hahnemann. He supposes that the action of the medicine is substituted for that of the disease, so as to supersede it entirely ; moreover, that the medicinal action ceases of itself, if



the dose is not repeated; and thus a cure takes place through the union in the medicine of greater power with more short-lived action. He supports the assertion of greater power by the fact, that medicines in an adequate dose exert an unconditional power over the body; that they will, in all circumstances, induce disordered action; whereas the natural morbid poisons are conditional agents, and only act when the system is predisposed to their influence; that the former act of themselves without any aid, but the latter require predisposition to aid them; therefore the former are stronger than the latter, and will supersede them when they have the opportunity of acting on the parts they occupy. The theory of promotion is supported by Dr. Curie. Every disease he considers to arise from the struggle of the system to throw off the morbid cause; the symptoms are the manifestation of that struggle; the object of the physician, therefore, is to assist nature, to promote her vis medicatrix, and this is done by giving a medicine which acts in producing similar symptoms. Hence the efficacy of treating disease on Homœopathic principles. The theory of reaction is based on the fact that there is in the system a power of reaction against any irritant. When, therefore, a medicine is given in disease, having the power of exciting similar symptoms, it is supposed that the cure is owing to the reaction of the system; and hence the necessity of a very small

dose. There is much to be said for all of these theories ; but, in my opinion, insuperable difficulties lie against all. Not one of them explains all cases.

The application of the Homœopathic principle to practice is attended with considerable difficulties. A comparison of the affections of the human system is necessarily liable to some uncertainty, on account of the shifting nature of those affections. Then the inadequacy of language to express fully the sensations of the pathogenetic observer, and its ambiguity as a bar to its right conception by him who applies this information to disease, presents another very serious difficulty. These observations, however, apply more to complicated chronic diseases than to acute ; and practice, by giving the medical man an insight into the general character and peculiarities of action of each medicine, corrects many errors flowing from these sources. As, however, the object of this paper is to induce inquiry, not to serve as a guide to treatment, I shall not attempt in this place to shew how these difficulties may be obviated.

That, however, the difficulties alluded to neither render the system impracticable, nor rob it of its claims to greater success than is attainable by the common mode of practice, the following evidence will satisfactorily prove. This evidence results from the report of a commission of inquiry, appointed by Duke William of Brunswick.

The books of both Allopathic and Homœopathic practitioners were examined, with the view of discovering the respective proportions between cases treated and deaths. The highest Homœopathic proportion was three in the hundred, the lowest less than one; while the Allopathic proportion ranged from eight to ten. When it is known that the practitioners of Brunswick are obliged, under pain of heavy penalties, to keep a faithful register of cases treated and deaths occurring; and that the inquiry extended in the case of one of the Homœopaths over ten years, and in the case of another over four, statistical information of this kind must be allowed to have great weight.

### ON THE MINUTE DOSES.

I have stated before, that a peculiarity in the Homœopathic principle, as compared with the Allopathic, is, that the medicines act on the parts affected. A consequence results from this peculiarity, which a considerate mind might have foreseen, although no one could *a priori* have appreciated its extent; the diminution, I mean, of the dose. The medicine that acts Allopathically, acts on a sound part, and is given in a dose which ensures its action, and very often its speedy expulsion from the system. The medicine that acts Homœopathically, acts on the diseased part,



and must be given in such a dose as that its action shall be confined to the part affected; in such a dose, therefore, as will not affect the body in a state of health, and as will not be expelled from the system. It is generally admitted that a diseased part is much more sensible than a healthy part. The slightest fillip of a finger upon an inflamed hand will produce more intense pain than a smart blow with the fist on a sound hand. The smallest beam of light through a shutter is intolerable to the inflamed eye, which in health could have faced the sun itself; and even where the local symptoms indicate torpor and deficient sensibility, that torpor and deficient sensibility are dependent upon deranged action in a part, which, on account of that deranged action, is exquisitely sensitive to its appropriate stimuli. Even in the case of indolent tumours, whose deficient sensibility and torpor do not depend on a central organ, it may be asserted that an exquisite sensibility exists with regard to morbid causes analogous to those which produce them, and keep them in existence. Now our medicines are such analogous morbid causes, for the principle of their administration is that they should produce similar symptoms; and the more similar the symptoms produced, the more similar will be the causes. Independently of this fact, which to my mind, however, is the true reason of the exquisite sensibility of a diseased part to a medicine

administered Homœopathically, it must be considered, that when the system is in health, it requires a considerable force to derange its equilibrium; and even after a strong impression has been made upon it by a morbid agent, there is a tendency to return, through a series of oscillations, to the healthy state. It is like one of those tumblers whose centre of gravity is below its point of support. But let it be once permanently deranged, let disease be once established, and every the slightest influence induces change, as every one knows to his cost who has what is called a weak point. These considerations might have led us to expect a considerable diminution of the dose in the application of the Homœopathic principle, but certainly not such a diminution as the experience of Hahnemann and his followers has proved to be necessary. This is a question, be it remembered, of pure experience. The results are strange, and contradict our preconceived notions; and the Homœopathist is sorry for it, for he sees in these facts the greatest stumbling-block to the reception of the system. Let it be remembered, however, that there is, in the reception by a set of regularly educated practical men of an apparently incredible fact, a strong presumption of its truth. The question is of the truth of a fact, which can be examined by experiment: its extreme improbability would induce strict inquiry, and evidence of the very



strongest character would be required for conviction. Who, that wishes to propagate a doctrine, would throw in the way of its reception such astounding assertions as that decillionths of a grain can cure, without the utmost unwillingness and the very strongest evidence of its truth? The Homœopathist, indeed, regrets extremely the necessity that is on him; but he feels that he must not shrink from declaring the truth from motives of craftiness. He says merely that he gives his remedy in those doses which experience has proved to him most efficacious for the cure. He refers you to experience. He asks you to try them. And to one objecting the impossibility that such doses can have any effect at all, he answers, that preconceived notions of what is possible or what impossible are no measure necessarily of the truth; and one objecting to them, as contrary to experience, he reminds of the exciting causes of plague, cholera, scarlet fever, measles, bilious attacks, and insanity. He admits that they will not act in health; for the presence of disease is the condition of their agency. There must be special predisposition before they can act. This fact also explains why the minute particles of medicinal agents, by which we are surrounded, have no action upon us; they require a special predisposition before they can act. In the consideration of this subject, Mr. Doppler, a German



mathematician, has made some observations which are well calculated to render more comprehensible the action of our small doses. It is not only the weight and bulk of a medicament, but the number of its points of contact, in other words, its surface, which affects its activity. This is admitted on all hands; for every one knows that two ounces of Epsom salts, taken in a very small quantity of water, are hardly as efficacious as half an ounce dissolved in a pint. Now the triturations and dilutions turn our medicines inside out as it were, and make them all surface. So that their activity, doubtlessly diminished with the diminution of bulk and weight, is increased with the increase of surface, and thus diminishes at a much lower ratio than that of the diminution of bulk and weight. It must also be observed, that there are many substances rendered inert by their form, nevertheless possessing active properties. Now trituration develops these properties by increasing their surface. This is the case with silica, sulphur, carbon, and several other substances. Indeed it may be asserted, that in all substances qualities are developed by extreme division which were not evident before. An objection frequently urged is, that actually nothing is given; that the division, in the preparation, is carried so far as that the original substance is lost, and that its actual presence cannot be proved by any physi-

cal or chemical sign. The best answer to this is an explanation of the mode of preparation. One grain of the substance is triturated with ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, added in three successive portions for nearly an hour. This is the first attenuation. The process is repeated with a grain of this mixture; and this is the second attenuation, and so on. If a grain of the first attenuation be dissolved, and the original substance tested for by chemical re-agents, its presence may be demonstrated. But if, in this first attenuation, every grain of the mixture can be proved, by chemical tests, to possess a portion of the original ingredient, it follows, that if a grain of this first attenuation be mixed with another ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk in a similar way, and for a similar time, the same result may be expected, and that that portion of the original ingredient, contained in this mixed grain, will be equally diffused over the whole mass, and in some very active substances this might be chemically proved also. The same reasoning applied to each attenuation will render the presence of the original ingredient in each case extremely probable, if it does not prove it, even after its attenuation has been carried beyond the appreciation of the senses. Nor can any one deny the possibility of this who knows what may be done with gold leaf. Iron may be detected in a solution of the nitro-muriate by

ferrocyanate of potass, although it has been divided into 24 millions of parts. Indigo, by the test of giving a blue colour to water, may be proved to be divisible into at least 100,000,000 of parts ; and the smell of a piece of musk may be perceived in a spacious apartment for several years without the piece being sensibly diminished, although the air of the apartment is continually renewed ; and what is more to the purpose, will produce medicinal effects in people of sensitive frames, or at least of peculiar idiosyncrasies. Ehrenberg also has discovered that a cubic inch of a conglomerate of infusoria contains more than 41,000,000 of these animalcules, every one of which has a perfect organization.

Dr. Turner, in his *Elements of Chemistry*, in speaking of the controversy with regard to the divisibility of matter, says, "Owing to the imperfection of our senses, the question cannot be determined by direct experiment, because matter certainly continues to be divisible long after it has ceased to be an object of sense." It has, however, been reserved for Hahnemann to prove, by the pathological effects of medicines, that the divisibility of matter may be carried to an extent hitherto unknown. By this test, it may be proved that matter is divisible into at least a decillion of parts. Let us, therefore, lay aside our scruples, based upon what is possible and what impossible, what contrary to or conforma-



ble with experience or preconceived notions, and let us try whether these things be so or not. The further we carry our researches into the world around us, the more we shall be convinced, that if there be an immensity which no eye can fathom and no finite intelligence comprehend, exemplified, for instance, in the blue ether around us, there is likewise a minuteness which defies conception, and which, though not equally obtrusive, is not less real and no less astonishing. In a beam of light of not an eighth of an inch in diameter, there lie at once the treasures of a landscape filled with a number of objects which no contrivance of arithmetic can express, and the glories of the heavens in all their immensity. But establish a galvanic communication between the north pole and the south, and the electric fluid, in quantity which no nicety of balance can detect and no intellect conceive, shall return to complete the circuit through the pathless ocean, to communicate the intelligence, and fulfil the will of man. If it be urged that because the minute doses have no action on the healthy body, therefore there is no evidence of their action at all, it may be answered, that, like many of the natural morbid poisons, they require predisposition to aid them; they require, in the part on which they act, the presence of a similar morbid affection:—that a man might as well argue against the existence of light, because

the ear could not hear it or the blind man see it ; or against the existence of electricity, because it exerted no influence on a conductor, though that conductor were a man ; or take the instance of our imaginary polar galvanic circuit, against the existence of that circuit, because a wire put into the ocean, out of that circuit, conveyed no galvanism and communicated no intelligence. It may also be urged that light, electricity, &c., are merely properties of bodies, and therefore imponderable ; and that therefore an analogy for tenuity, derived from properties of matter which have no independent existence, and of which therefore quantity cannot be predicated, is absurd. We answer, the power of acting on the living body is also a property of matter ; that the action of our minute doses is not derived either from their physical or chemical properties ; that that action is essentially dynamic, and by dynamic we mean, related to the vital principle alone ; that the vital principle is regulated by its own laws, which supersede those of chemistry and gravity, and affected by agents suited to affect it alone, which have no influence, as far as regards the particular property by which they affect the vital principle, on any thing else in nature, as is evident when we consider many of the natural morbid poisons—the exciting cause of scarlet fever for instance. Let these considerations, then, be well weighed :—first, that the

part affected is acted on—then, that there exists an analogy between the action of the medicine and that of the cause of the disease; that as the symptoms bear an exact relation to their exciting cause, increasing with its increase and diminishing with its diminution, being an exact index of its changes, it is extremely probable, that an analogous morbid cause will exercise an influence in proportion to its analogy; that the intensity of action of the natural morbid poisons shows that intensity bears no proportion to bulk; that intensity of action, under certain conditions, and perfect inaction out of them, that intensity, too, being consistent with the most extreme tenuity, is frequently to be met with in other districts of the kingdom of nature; that action, on the living body, appears to be a property of matter as much as light or electricity is; that the activity of medicines is in proportion to surface, as well as weight; and that extension takes place to an inconceivable extent in the preparation of our medicines; and, finally, that this is a question to be determined, not by reasoning, but experiment. I say, let these considerations be well weighed, and I have but little doubt that a candid mind will make the experiment. A refusal to make the experiment, backed by such analogies, and attested by at least 500 regularly educated medical men, when every day a new medicine is tried, on the *ipse*



*dixit* perhaps of an unknown contributor to a journal, will be, to my mind, the acting out of a marvel by those who will not believe one, unparalleled in all the incomprehensibilities of Homœopathy.

But although I have defended the use of such a minute dose as the decillionth of a grain, it is not to be supposed that the Homœopath, any more than the practitioner in the ordinary way, uses only one dose. The one, as well as the other, suits the dose to the disease. Thus the question of dose has been much agitated among us; and a yet more rigorous and systematic investigation than any that has yet been instituted seems necessary to determine it with exactness. It seems, however, to have been almost generally agreed, that in acute diseases, and all cases where the morbid virus is very energetic, or present in large quantities, a much larger dose than a decillionth, and a much more frequent repetition, is necessary than in chronic diseases. Thus in cases of inflammation, the third, second, first attenuations, and even a drop of the mother tincture, are frequently used; the frequency of exhibition varying from every five minutes to every six hours, according to the urgency of the case. When, therefore, Homœopathy is opposed on the ground of infinitesimal doses, or even of decillionths of a grain, being given, it must be understood that the objection has only a partial application, and

that there are some diseases in which we have as little to do with fractions as the objectors ; and that we would, in all cases, gladly agree with them in the use of quantities expressed by whole numbers, did not experience prove that our conformity would be dangerous.

The necessity for inquiring into Homœopathy is urged by all who have paid any attention to the subject ; even those who, after inquiry, have been led to reject it as a whole, speak of it with unqualified respect, and uphold its claim to attention. The illustrious and venerable Hufeland says, “ Homœopathia seems to me to be particularly valuable in two points of view ; first, because it promises to lead the art of healing back to the only true path of quiet observation and experience, and gives new life to the too much neglected worth of symptomatology ; and, secondly, because it furnishes simplicity in the treatment of disease.” Broussais, too, in a public lecture to the Ecole de Medecine, says, “ Many distinguished persons are occupied with it ; we cannot reject it without a hearing ; we must investigate the truth it contains.” This also is Brera’s testimony, “ Homœopathy is decried by some as useless and strange ; and though it appears to the great majority as ridiculous and extraordinary, it can, nevertheless, not be denied that it has taken its stand in the scientific world. Like every other doctrine, it has its books, its journals, its chairs,

its hospitals, chemical lectures, professors, and most respectable communities to hear and appreciate." And even Andral, whose testimony, founded upon inconclusive experiments, has been so often quoted against us, says, "Without prejudging the question which the Homœopathists have lately raised upon the property possessed by curative agents of determining, in the organism, diseases which, in Allopathy, we propose to combat by them, we believe that it is a view supported by some incontestable facts, and which, on account of the immense consequences which may result from it, deserves, at least, the attention of observers. On the supposition, which is very probable, that Hahnemann has fallen, in this respect, into the exaggeration so easy to theorists, yet among the numerous facts cited by him in support of his opinions, it is certain that there are some perfectly in harmony with his theory. Let these experiments be repeated, and it is probable that other facts, as authentic, will be seen to arise. Let these facts be reviewed by a powerful mind, and, after having been examined in all their aspects, let them be compared, and who shall predict the consequences that may result from such an inquiry?"

Not to weary you with citations, I will conclude with one from Millingen, the author of "The Curiosities of Medical Experience":—"But the facts I am about recording,—facts



which have induced me, from having been one of the warmest opponents of this system, to investigate carefully and dispassionately its practical points,—will effectually contradict all these assertions regarding the inefficacy of the Homœopathic doses, the influence of diet, or the agency of the mind; for, in the following cases, in no one instance could such influences be brought into action. They were, with scarcely any exception, experiments made without the patients' knowledge, and where no time was allowed for any particular regimen. They may, moreover, be conscientiously relied upon, since they were made with a view to prove the fallacy of the Homœopathic practice." Nor is the evidence of the multitudes of regularly educated medical men who have examined, approved, and adopted the Homœopathic principle, to be overlooked. Many of them are men who had already reaped the highest rewards their profession could bestow, who had every thing to lose and nothing to gain by a change, and all of them would have been entitled to the attention of the medical world, had they sought it by the publication of their ordinary medical observations in the periodicals of the profession. Is all testimony to be disbelieved the moment it testifies to facts of an extraordinary character? Is that asserted with regard to the Homœopathic principle and minute doses, which Hume asserted with regard

to miracles, that no testimony can prove their truth? Hume himself must have been silenced had the defenders of miracles been able to say to him what we say to you, "We will reproduce the facts to which we testify before your eyes." Of this one thing, at least, I am sure; he would not have refused to witness the experiments. Let it be remembered that the strangeness of a fact occurring in an experimental investigation, is a guarantee for its being rigidly and jealously examined; and the reception of it by hundreds of practical and well-informed men, is a strong argument for its truth. In speculative matters, this, I am aware, would be no argument at all; but in a practical matter, where the facts are reproducible, and can be repeated with endless variations, it is of the greatest force. All, however, that is requested of you, of deference to testimony, is to inquire for yourselves whether these things be so or not. It is not belief of the testimony that is asked, but a trial of it. This request cannot be consistently refused, unless it be urged that the testimony is worthless, or the facts trivial or impossible. With regard to the fidelity of the testimony, it is submitted that the characters of Hahnemann and Muhlenbein are above attack; and with regard to the competence of the witnesses, it is urged, that the great majority of those who have adopted these principles have been practical men,—men who

were in the daily habit of witnessing disease, and were consequently well acquainted with its course, and the sequence and rapidity of its changes. When, therefore, such men testify that they have seen a well-developed case of inflammation cut short by an agent, they testify to a fact of which they are competent witnesses. They know what they say. Who that knows the regular march of the phlegmonous diseases, when unresisted, either on the one hand to resolution, or on the other to suppuration, can maintain that men, well acquainted with this class of diseases, are always attributing effects to nothing, and are constantly deceived? When, for instance, it is attested, that in every case where there is local inflammation, a hot dry skin and great thirst, the exhibition of a dose of aconite invariably, and within a few hours, removes the general symptoms, and vastly relieves the local, can it be maintained that this is a mistake? He who takes this ground must be prepared to maintain that local inflammation, attended with inflammatory fever, always spontaneously decreases, an assertion which I cannot conceive will ever be made. If, then, the witnesses be admitted to be honest, and the facts to which they testify, such as they cannot be mistaken about, the question may be considered as settled; for assertions, which define the bounds of possibility, will hardly, in these days, be made



by men of enlightened minds. The human mind, if it be not struck with awe, is, at least, compelled to modesty by the astounding discoveries that are daily being made. That the facts testified are trivial and deserve no attention, will not be maintained by any who consider that the happiness of the healthy, and the existence of the sick, hang upon them. Let me, then, press upon you this inquiry in perfect confidence as to the results. It is not one of a laborious or complicated character. Let belladonna, in the small doses, recommended by Hahnemann, be given in scarlet fever, cynanche tonsillaris, or erysipelas, especially when there is any affection of brain; aconite, in cases of local inflammation, with inflammatory fever, and the results will be perfectly conclusive. But as a consequence of the action of the medicine in these doses being proved, and if my life were my own I would cheerfully stake it on the result, the admission of the Homœopathic principle follows as a necessary consequence. If these minute doses have any action at all, they must act Homœopathically. Take the *Materia Medica Pura* of Hahnemann, and try them on any other principle, and they will not act at all. Try them on the perfectly healthy body; they will rarely, in a single dose, have any effect at all. They require the presence of a peculiar predisposition before they can act, that predisposition shewing itself in symptoms similar to those produced by the medi-

cine, in a large dose, in health. Try them on the enantio-pathic principle, or that on which opium is given in sleeplessness to procure sleep, and the man will remain sleepless still. The same negative result will follow if they be administered on the Allopathic principle ; and thus the smallness of the dose, if it has drawn upon the system the ridicule which arises from the violation of preconceived ideas, has at least this advantage, that it discloses its principle of action, and thus proves the truth of Hahnemann's assertion. How easy, therefore, does it now become, for those who inquire into this subject, to decide upon what cost him such laborious and persevering investigation.

In conclusion, Gentlemen, permit me again to urge upon you inquiry into this subject. All the responsibilities resulting from unsuspecting confidence on the part of the public are upon you. It is to you that the eyes of the helpless sufferer turn in anxious expectation of relief ; and I am proud to say that I belong to a profession to whom this appeal, from whatever quarter, is rarely made without producing an effort at assistance. I bear you witness, that your burning desire, your continual anxiety, is to have greater power in controuling disease ; and when, after your baffled skill has exhausted all its resources in vain, the friend that you love, the child of your hopes, or the wife of your bosom, is torn from your unavailing attempts at rescue, the hea-

venborn and free spirit beats itself against the bars of its earthly cage, in all the agony of unutterable desire, unbacked by power.

It is to this feeling I appeal, when I say, inquire into a system which promises a tenfold increase of that power. About the result I have no doubt. Facts, evidenced by the testimony, the repeated testimony of the senses, confirmed by the inductions of the understanding, rest upon the immutability of the great Centre of all existence, upon the truth of Him who made the eye and ear, and gave intelligence to the mind.

If but one of your number, centres as each of you are of an extensive circle of influence, be led to adopt these truths, he who addresses you feels that that would be an honour even too great for him who has had nothing to do with these great discoveries beyond the reception of them, and who trusts that neither in the spirit of this essay, nor in his own heart, has he ever lost sight of that humbling truth.